of planning, funding, executing and operating the flood control schemes primarily rests with the concerned State Govemments. The assistance rendered by the Central Government is technical, catalytic and promotional in nature.

The Government of India has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission, Patna to identify the schemes for inclusion in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely, "Critical anti-erosion works in Ganga Basin States" which is being formulated for 10th Plan with a central share of Rs. 133.85 crore. The Committee has already held two meetings. The State Governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Jharkhahd and West Bengal have been asked to prioritise the schemes for consideration of the Committee, keeping in view the availability of funds.

Problem of water due to drought

3378. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many States due to severe drought in the country in the year 2002, will face gruelling problem of water in 2003; and

(b) if so, how the Ministry in coordination with the Ministry of Rural Development and other concerned Ministries are planning to solve the problem by assisting the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) In view of the low storage available in many of the important reservoirs being monitored by Central Water Commission and also the fact that the post-monsoon rainfall in many of the States during 2002 has not been encouraging, the shortage of water is apprehended. The overall position during the year 2003 shall depend upon the Meteorological events during the year especially during the monsoon.

(b) In order to assist the State Governments to meet the water shortage, the task-force constituted under the Chairmanship of Union Secretary of Water Resources has informed the State representatives about various schemes of different Central Ministries and the additional Central Assistance which can be provided to the States. The Task-Force has made number of recommendations including an early release of funds

from Central Relief Fund (CRF), National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) and Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). States were advised to immediately avail the assistance being provided under 5% of the allocated funds under ARWSP to meet the contingency arising out of the natural calamities and other emergent situations. Geological Survey of India and Ministry of Petroleum have agreed to consider the request from drought-affected States to provide their expertise and drilling rigs to the State Governments. Drought-affected States are provided assistance under CRF, to which Central & State Government concerned contriumc in the ratio of 3:1. In addition assistance is considered from the NCCF for natural calamities of severe nature in accordance with a set procedure. To help the State Governments in their efforts to harness the water from natural resources and accelerate the creation of irrigation potential by early completion of ongoing schemes, Government of India have launched Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) since 1996-97. States have also been advised to take over the exploratory wells drilled by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) for enhancing their water supply. Government of India is also promoting rain water harvesting through water shed management programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof top rain water harvesting under the sector reform project of ARWSP of Ministry of Rural Development for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Governments and other implementing agencies.

Baglihar Hydro-power Project

3379. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY :
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether talks between India and Pakistan held in early February, 2003 regarding Islamabad's reservations about the design of the 450 MW Baglihar Hydro-electric Power Project on river Chenab in Kashmir, have ended in a deadlock;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Pakistan has decided to invite a "neutral expert" to resolve the issue; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?